

# Ben Jonson Primary School



## Equality Policy and Objectives

**Date reviewed:** March 2022

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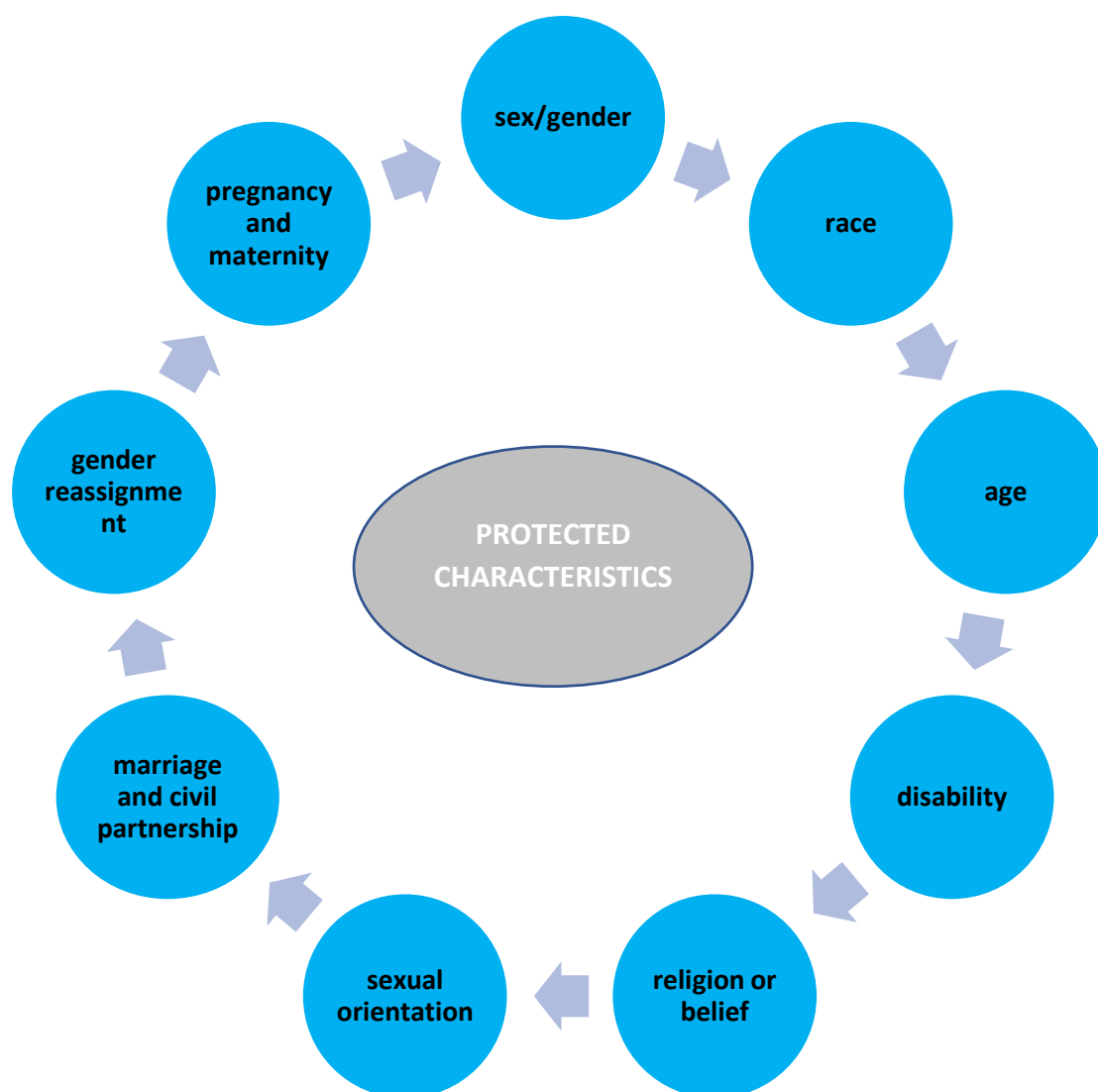
## 1. Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty that applies to maintained and independent schools in England and Wales and came into effect in April 2011. It covers all aspects of school life related to how a school treats pupils, parents and carers, employees, volunteers and all other members of the school community. It requires us to report on how we are showing due regard to inequalities within our school and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.

## 2. Statement of Intent

At Ben Jonson Primary School, we value and celebrate the individuality of all our pupils and staff, and are committed to ensuring equality of education and to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest standards.

## 3. Protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act (2010) include:



The Equality Act (2010) makes it unlawful for the responsible body (governing body or local authority) of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:

- in relation to admissions;
- in the way it provides education for pupils;
- in the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service, or
- by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any detriment.

#### 4. The full range of school policies and practice

This policy is developed within, and supported by the broader framework of our school's policies, particularly those concerned with:

- Pupils' progress, attainment and assessment
- The content of the curriculum
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Inclusion (Special Educational Needs; English as an Additional Language)
- Teaching and learning
- Admissions and attendance
- Staff Recruitment and Professional Development
- Health and Safety
- Disciplinary Procedures and Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy

#### 5. Our Commitment

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and we commit ourselves to work throughout the whole school community to:



We also recognise that there are other factors, such as socio-economics, that we as a school must be aware of in order to ensure that no individual, or group of pupils, is unfairly discriminated against, whether or not they are protected by the Equality Act 2010. So, for example, it would be wrong to set homework that required internet access unless either all pupils have internet access out of school, or suitable provision is made in school so that all pupils have an equal opportunity to complete the required work.

We aim to reflect the multi-ethnic nature of our society and ensure that the education we offer fosters positive attitudes to all people and promotes community cohesion.

We believe:

- that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit Ben Jonson Primary School.

- in creating an atmosphere where each member of the school community feels equally valued and secure and has equal access to the opportunities that the schools provide.
- that all pupils should be helped to develop a confident sense of personal and cultural identity, which is receptive and respectful towards others.
- that every pupil should develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that they need in order to participate in Britain's multi-ethnic society, and in the wider context of an interdependent world.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

### 6.1. The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented. Along with the Local Authority the governing body is responsible for ensuring that no pupil or potential pupil is discriminated against, harassed or victimised:

- in relation to admissions,
- in the way that the school provides education for pupils,
- in the way that the school provides access to any benefit, facility or service, or
- by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

### 6.2. The Governors and the Headteacher

The Governors and the Headteacher will:

- set targets to challenge all children to achieve to their potential,
- deploy resources effectively and efficiently to ensure that all children receive appropriate support,
- ensure that materials and displays reflect the diversity of society but avoid stereotyping,
- minimise the effect on pupils' learning of social and economic deprivation,
- celebrate diversity,
- plan the content and delivery of the curriculum considering the age, background, protected characteristics and SEN of pupils,
- prevent discrimination, harassment or victimisation on any basis, for both pupils and staff,
- ensure an inclusive approach to children with disabilities,
- ensure that staff understand what constitutes direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
- provide training in equality and anti-discrimination issues,
- provide information in home languages to inform parents and carers of issues affecting their children's education,
- ensure that the school environment is accessible to visitors and parents, and that events such as parents' evenings are held in parts of the school that are fully accessible,
- review recruitment and selection processes for potential discriminatory or unlawful practice, and promote equality within the workforce,
- ensure that official guidance (such as from the LA) on employment issues, including staff disciplinary and dismissal procedures, is followed.

### 6.3. The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy and for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

The Headteacher will inform the Governing Body about:

- arrangements at the school for the admission of pupils with disabilities,
- the steps to prevent those pupils being treated less favourably than other pupils,
- the facilities to assist access to the school by pupils with disabilities,
- incidents of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, involving pupils or staff.

The Headteacher will ensure that all incidents are recorded and reported to the LA as appropriate.

The Headteacher will report to the governing body, at least annually, and this report should include:

- the number of incidents reported each term,
- protected characteristics of victims and perpetrators,
- types of abuse,
- action taken,
- how training needs of all staff are met, and
- how the curriculum contributes to promoting community cohesion and addressing discrimination.

#### *6.4. All Staff*

All staff will:

- deal appropriately with all incidents of discrimination that may occur,
- know how to identify and challenge discrimination,
- incorporate principles of equality and diversity into all aspects of their work,
- encourage all pupils to participate in school life,
- ensure that the delivery of the curriculum is appropriate for the whole class,
- demonstrate and promote positive attitudes towards all people,
- challenge stereotypes in the classroom environment and in the playground,
- demonstrate respect for anyone and everyone, whether parents,
- pupils, colleagues, volunteers or visitors to the school, avoid any discriminatory behaviour.

If a member of staff feels that they are the subject of unfair treatment or discriminatory behaviour, then the school has the responsibility to investigate this and to protect and support staff.

#### *6.5. The Whole School Community*

All members of the school community are responsible for ensuring that they behave with respect towards all other members of the school community and that they do not encourage prejudice and discrimination.

### **7. Dealing with Incidents**

- Discrimination, harassment and victimisation can take many different forms, and may be intentional or unintentional. Examples include:
  - unfair treatment,
  - lack of access to services,
  - verbal abuse and threats,

- offensive emails or text messages,
- comments made in discussion time,
- jokes,
- physical assault,
- damage to property,
- the refusal to work with others because of a protected characteristic.

It is therefore important that everyone linked with the school community is aware of attitudes and behaviour that are unacceptable at Ben Jonson Primary School through training, assemblies, newsletters, circle time etc.

If anyone witnesses or hears about an incident that may be discrimination, harassment or victimisation then they should follow these steps.

### 7.1. Initial Response

- Treat the issue seriously.
- Respond immediately if possible, and within 10 days at most.
- Reinforce the school's position and rules on matters of equality.
- Focus on the perpetrator's behaviour rather than on the person.
- Support and affirm the victim.
- Empathise with pupils' feelings.

### 7.2. Investigation

- The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will lead the investigation.
- Listen to all parties and witnesses if possible.
- Address underlying issues as well as behaviour that made the incident one relating to equality. For example, a playground argument over ownership of a football may lead to a pupil making a racist comment – both issues need to be dealt with.
- Do not treat incidents as a case of simple bullying, but be able to explain why this is a racist incident (for example), if you judge it as such.

### 7.3. Further Response

- Inform key members of staff.
- Follow up with both the perpetrator(s) and victim(s).
- Address the perpetrator's behaviour and correct misconceptions.
- Reinforce the school's position.
- If appropriate it may be useful to bring the parties together and allow them to be a part of resolving the situation.
- Contact parents of all parties involved in an appropriate manner. This may be a meeting, a letter or a telephone call.

Please note that victims have the right to refer cases to the police if their parents so wish and all parties have a right to complain to the governing body if they feel the incident has not been appropriately handled by the head teacher.

### 7.4. When dealing with victims, staff should:

- Listen attentively.
- Remain calm and reassuring.

- Accept the victim's language and terminology.
- Remember that to report an incident may need considerable courage.
- Acknowledge the feelings of the victim(s).
- Confirm that they were right to make the disclosure.
- Show they understand the difficulty of discussing the matter.
- Offer immediate support by reassuring the victim that the matter will be treated seriously and that a full investigation will take place.
- Ascertain whether or not the incident is part of a pattern – ask if the person has been the victim on previous occasions.
- Indicate that the information needs to be shared with others in authority in the school in order to stop further incidents.

If the victim is adamant that they want no further action to be taken, the incident should nevertheless be recorded.

## 8. Incidents Involving Staff

### 8.1. Allegations made against a member of staff

An allegation made against any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, or other adult in the school is a serious matter, and it is the responsibility of the governing body to deal with it. If upheld, the allegation could lead to disciplinary action. Allegations should be raised by the pupil or his or her parents under the school's complaints procedures.

### 8.2. Allegations made by a member of staff

Where a member of staff is the victim, he or she will be offered appropriate support and may also wish to contact LA services. Staff should also contact their Trade Union for support.

## 9. Monitoring and Evaluation

At Ben Jonson Primary School we make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. As part of this process, we will monitor the performance of different groups, including each of the protected characteristics, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress.

If the data demonstrates that pupils with a particular protected characteristic are under performing, the new positive action provisions within the Equality Act 2010 do allow the school to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by that particular group of pupils.

Therefore, we use this information to adjust future teaching and learning plans, as necessary. Resources are also available to support groups of pupils where the information suggests that progress is not as good as it should be. The governing body will receive regular updates on pupil performance information.

The school's performance information is compared to national data and LA data, to ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress when compared to all schools, and to schools in similar circumstances.

Parents receive an annual questionnaire about the school which will include some questions about the success of our policies in promoting their involvement in their children's learning.

Our monitoring activities enable us to identify any differences in pupil performance. This allows us to take appropriate action to meet the needs of specific groups and to set targets in order to make the necessary improvements.

We will monitor the use of the playground and ensure that there is equality of opportunity in relation to its use.

We will monitor the children who are using our extended services and ensure that all children have equal opportunity to take advantage of these services.

## Equality Objectives

### **Equality objectives Objective 1:**

To narrow any gaps in attainment and progress that have arisen between groups of pupils within the school's community by ensuring that all groups and individuals have their needs fully met in order to achieve their full potential, and to make good progress or better.

*Why we have chosen this objective:*

To ensure that we are proactive in our efforts to narrow the attainment gap and to include children with protected characteristics in this monitoring.

*To achieve this objective, we plan to:*

- Monitor children's progress termly in English and maths.
- Analyse progress of groups across the school, gender, ethnicity, FSM, summer born, mobility and EAL, and provide support where appropriate.
- Act on any trends or patterns in the data that require additional support for pupils
- Analysis of end of year results for EYFS, Phonics, KS1 and KS2.
- Be proactive in the support we offer families to engage with appropriate services and agencies so they receive focused early help

### **Equality objectives Objective 2:**

To ensure equality of opportunity permeates the whole curriculum and ethos of the school

*Why we have chosen this objective:*

Continue to promote tolerance, acceptance, celebration of differences, friendship and understanding through different aspects of the curriculum.

*To achieve this objective, we plan to:*

- In delivering the curriculum, to ensure it contains non-stereotypical images in order to overcome preconceived ideas of gender, ethnic origin, culture or religion
- To include in resources books, materials and equipment that are multicultural and non-sexist, providing positive images of all groups
- encourage children from all characteristics including socio economic factors to take part in enrichment activities

### **Equality objectives Objective 3:**

To promote the school values of Brave, Kind and Curious through all appropriate curricular opportunities, with particular reference to issues of equality and diversity, and that the curriculum reflects and supports the needs of pupils with protected characteristics.



*Why we have chosen this objective:*

To ensure that our school community understands that we live in a country that recognises, celebrates and tolerates diversity through our school values.

*To achieve this objective, we plan to:*

- Continually review our curriculum
- Purchase appropriate resources and supports to include all children with all aspects of school life including physical equipment to support those with physical barriers
- Train staff in equality and inclusion practice
- Train staff in ways to access and use outdoor learning to promote well-being
- Promote the fundamental British values of Democracy, the Rule of Law, Individual Liberty and Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.
- Ensure that our school prepares pupils positively for life in Modern Britain and promotes fundamental British Values.

## Appendix 1

**Direct discrimination** occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when a “provision, criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic. An example might be holding a parents’ meeting on a Friday evening, which could make it difficult for observant Jewish parents to attend. It is a defence against a claim of indirect discrimination if it can be shown to be “a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”. This means both that the reason for the rule or practice is legitimate, and that it could not reasonably be achieved in a different way which did not discriminate.

**Harassment** has a specific legal definition in the Act - it is “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic.

Where schools are concerned, the offence of harassment as defined in this way in the Act applies only to harassment because of disability, race, sex or pregnancy and maternity, and not to religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. It is very important to recognise that this does not mean that schools are free to bully or harass pupils on these other grounds - to do so would still be unlawful as well as unacceptable. Any case against the school would be on grounds of direct discrimination rather than harassment.

Thus, if a teacher belittles a pupil and holds her up to ridicule in class because of a disability she has, this could lead to a court case alleging unlawful harassment. The same unacceptable treatment directed at a lesbian pupil, or based on a pupil’s religion, could lead to a case claiming direct discrimination. The practical consequences for the school, and the penalties, would be no different.

**Victimisation** occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act. A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person’s complaint by giving evidence or information, but it includes anything that is done under or in connection with the Act. Even if what a person did or said was incorrect or misconceived, for example based on a misunderstanding of the situation or of what the law provides, they are protected against retaliation unless they were acting in bad faith. The reason for this is to ensure that people are not afraid to raise genuine concerns about discrimination because of fear of retaliation.

As well as it being unlawful to victimise a person who does a protected act, a child must not be victimised because of something done by their parent or a sibling in relation to the Act. This means that a child must not be made to suffer in any way because, for example, her mother has made a complaint of sex discrimination against the school, or her brother has claimed that a teacher is bullying him because he is gay, whether or not the mother or brother was acting in good faith.

If a pupil has himself or herself done a protected act – such as making a complaint of discrimination against a teacher – then the child’s own good faith will be relevant. For example, if the parent’s complaint is based on information from her child and the child was deliberately lying, it is not victimisation for the school to punish the child in the same way as it might do any other dishonest pupil.